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The Individualization of the Child in the Institution

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UNLESS an institution can deal with each child in it as a distinct individual, even though he may be one of a group of fifteen or more, that institution has little reason for existing. So many institutions have developed ways of individualizing their children that our old methods of regimentation and "routinization" should no longer have any place in our programs. It may well be that some of us still carry on along the former lines without realizing how much more we could help children if we did a little house-cleaning. Far too many institutions still hang on to policies and procedures which produce the results of mass treatment. There is nothing more important in institutional work today than a policy which calls for the maximum of individual attention and study of each child in these group homes. Let us stop and consider, therefore, what we can do along these lines.

Inasmuch as the writer's most recent experiences have been with the Hillside Children's Center, it is only logical that the points stressed here are those which are being used in this institution. No one who reads this, however, should believe for one moment that all of these points always produce wonderful results, or that any of these points produce remarkable results at all times and with all children. However, all of these ideas have helped many children, not only at Hillside, but in other institutions, and they have, therefore, been tested and found practical.

Individualization must be keynote of institution

Every institution caring for children should have as its basic philosophy the firm conviction that every policy, every decision, and every procedure, must be based solely on the thought that each child is a separate and distinct personality, and that he must and will be considered as such. Unless this philosophy pervades the whole organization, and becomes a part of the thinking of each Board member and staff member, the needs of certain children will be overlooked. This philosophy can be applied to every phase of the

work, whether it be directly with the child in the cottage or in connection with the maintenance man doing work on the grounds. All situations can be traced back to the individual child if we try to see the connection. The neat condition of the grounds may mean much to many individual children, for the grounds are part of their home, a home in which they will take pride or not, depending upon the way they are maintained. The standard of work in the laundry is of vital importance to most of the children, for the appearance of their clothes sets them up or lets them down. The courtesy of the telephone operator at the switchboard may make a girl proud when her Dad or boy friend calls her. It may also serve as an example of courtesy. This philosophy of the individualization of each child must be so much a part of us that our thinking must be automatically based on it, so that it is not used on infrequent occasions, but always, day in and day out. All other means to help each child come from this, and without this most other means fail.

Trained staff and in-service training program essential

The best policies fail unless they are carried out through the medium of a capable staff, from the executive down. We cannot expect to deal understandingly with boys and girls without intelligent cottage parents, social workers and others, who not only have intelligence, but preparation for the job, a warm personality, sympathetic understanding, tolerance, fairness, and good health. We all need and desire affection, and this is particularly true with boys and girls who have been deprived of the love of their parents or relatives. No cottage parent should be hired who has not a real, deep affection for children. When a child realizes that his cottage mother really cares for him in spite of anything he may do—and we all know of the many ways in which they test us—we have gone a long way toward providing that help which the boy needs. Having the right philosophy,

our first step must be to secure the right kind of staff which will be able to carry out our policies adequately. One of the real difficulties in getting adequate staff is the altogether inadequate salary paid.

The difficult job which we assign to our staff cannot be done well unless we continuously and persistently try to keep up with the procession by taking advantage of all new or old ideas which are helpful. We must always be in training, and one good way to keep in training is to stage interesting and helpful staff meetings, based on some kind of study and discussion plan. We at Hillside believe that we have been unusually successful in this through our regular weekly sessions. During the past year we have used as our discussion material "Understanding Children," compiled by the New York State Committee on Mental Hygiene of the State Charities Aid Association and the Child Welfare League. We feel that this course represents the best material which we have yet seen, and we commend it to all child care organizations. This in-service training is probably the most important single factor we have found in bringing to us all the need for individualizing each child. We learn new methods and new procedures, which put into our hands new tools with which to help John, Mary, Tony, or the others. We are also reminded of good old methods, which have been buried in the back of our minds, which are invaluable. Always the need is stressed in these discussions for getting back to the causes of behavior. Knowing the reasons, we then have a better chance of helping each child.

We gain many other things of value through these sessions. One of them is the realization that our responsibility for each individual child in our groups is not carried alone by any one person—cottage parent or social worker—but is shared by all. This thought relaxes us and removes the pressure, and makes us better able to use our understanding to advantage. The knowledge that the cottage parent can come to the office and talk over Frank's problems with his social worker makes all the difference in the world to her, and through her to Frank. This interdependence and sharing of responsibility is absolutely necessary if we are to give each child what he needs.

Intake policy important factor

In order that we may help each child who comes to the institution we should admit to the institution only those children whose needs can be met by our program. This is one of the most difficult responsibilities of any institutional group, and, at the same time, one of the most important. Too often we admit a child because his mother or uncle or older brother

feels that the institution is the best place for him. Frequently a careful study of the situation, and an evaluation of the child's needs, plus an interpretation of the institutional program, would convince these relatives that there is a better plan for their boy. It is to be hoped that empty beds in an institution no longer provide a reason for accepting children in order that per capita costs may be lessened, though too often, we fear, this is true.

While it is essential that institutions will not accept children who can not be benefited by care inside, it is also important that children should not be accepted in institutions who would be harmful for the others in the group. To be sure, we do want to help each individual child, but if the welfare of one individual interferes with the welfare of several individuals there can be only one answer.

Need for intake study

A doctor can not help his patient without a thorough and complete physical history, plus other pertinent facts of the patient's life. By the same token, we can not help our children through any individual treatment unless we are fully aware of the experiences which our children have lived through. Some time ago an institutional executive told me that when he received a case history of a boy who came to his institution he stuffed it in the back of a drawer, and some time six months later he brought it out to see if his findings corresponded to those listed in the history. We question the chances any boy might have of being understood in this institution. Let us make the best possible use of all valuable information which is available, so that we can deal more intelligently with Dick or Helen as they come to us for help.

As we speak of the need for the most careful study of each child who knocks at our doors, we take it for granted that this study should be made by a social worker who has had such training and experience that she can adequately assume this important responsibility. This intake worker should be one of a group of others, depending upon the size of the institution, who work under the supervision of a capable case supervisor. Not only are social workers needed to make the intake study, but also to work with the children in the institution, cooperating with the cottage parents, and providing that help and perspective which can not be given by one whose training is limited and whose duties confine her the greater part of the time to the cottage.

Contact with family

Providing care within the institution for a child is only a small part of the program which we should

carry on. We cannot begin to treat our children as individuals unless, first of all, we are fully aware of the family situation from which they have come, with which they will have contact during their stay in the institution, and to which, in a majority of cases, they will go when they leave the institution. We must at all times be in close touch with the family situation, for it is the members of the family, broken or otherwise, who play the most vital role in our children's lives, and who affect their conduct and attitudes while they are in the institution. This contact with the family must continue through a social worker or someone who pays the role of a social worker. A small institution may not be able to afford these services, but in that event they should either be provided through someone who is not directly a part of the institution, or those working with the children should have such an understanding of the values of these services that they should approximate them just as far as is possible. It can safely be said that no institution which neglects to keep closely in touch with parents, relatives, and friends of our children can possibly provide the help which our individual children need.

It seems hardly necessary in this day and age for us to say that we can not help many individuals in our institutions unless we make use of all possible sources through which we can secure the help which mental hygiene can give. Everyone working with children should have an appreciation of what mental hygiene can contribute, so that we may be able to recognize those boys and girls who cannot make use of the institution and who should be referred to local mental hygiene clinics or to a psychiatrist. Tell me of an institution in which the administration does not believe in psychiatry, or the use of mental hygiene, and I will tell you of an institution where children are not getting a reasonable chance. Mental hygiene is essential today in the proper care of children, and which should be used to the utmost where it is needed, thereby saving children who otherwise may land in the reformatory or in the state hospital.

Flexible program essential

It is frequently said that rules are made to be broken. Institutions should have as few set rules as possible, because nothing tends toward regimentation and institutionalization of our children more than a multitude of rules and inflexibility in interpreting them. We must have certain guides for our children to follow, rules to which they should and must conform, but these can be kept at a low minimum. Furthermore, the few rules that are necessary should

be more or less flexible to meet the needs and requirements of our individual children. There is no doubt that this policy means added responsibility and added work for all staff members. It would be far simpler to have definite hide-bound rules, and if these rules were broken certain definite and never-failing punishments would be inflicted. Where freedom is allowed children, in order that they may learn through their own experiences, it calls for mature judgment and wisdom to set up an all-round discipline which will be most beneficial. Tom or Leslie may break the same rule, but it does not follow that the same treatment should be given both boys. Their temperaments as well as the attending circumstances may be as far apart as the two poles and, therefore, treatment which would help one might harm the other. Yet, treatment for these two boys must be provided in such a fair and square manner that even though it varies, neither these two boys nor others who are watching will have any occasion to feel that one is being treated less fairly than the other. If we will check up on the rules and regulations which we lay down for our children, it may be that we will be amazed at the number of them, such a number that no healthy, normal, vigorous child can help but knock his head against one or more of them every day in the week.

Use of case conferences

It seems trivial in this day and age to mention the value of conferences at which the progress of each individual child is discussed at certain regular intervals. In certain institutions, though in all too few, regular conferences take place, in order that the progress of each child may be noted periodically. No more important step can be taken than this, and these conferences should be inclusive enough to take in all staff members on the grounds who in any way touch the child's life, for each one may have a vital contribution to make. Not only are these conferences invaluable because of the information that different ones can contribute about the child being discussed, but because each can learn about the many sides of this child's life that we must keep in mind. We discover that even though Mary is causing us a great deal of concern because of her lying and stealing, she really has many fine qualities, which we have at times overlooked. Not only are we able thus frequently to find the cause of the trouble, but we realize that greater progress is being made than we at first thought, even though certain problems continue to come to the fore rather often. After all, in baseball we feel that a man who can hit three hundred through

the year is pretty near tops. Can we use this same slant on our children, and realize that being perfect is as impossible for our children as for ourselves?

These conferences are the best possible guides in connection with a change in our plans for children. Frequently a change in plan means a transfer from the institution to a foster home, where Johnny may be able to receive more individual attention which will help him overcome a certain habit, or which will give him a more personal tie to a substitute father or mother for whom Johnny is craving. Or it may be that the time has come to try Johnny out with his uncle, who has long been interested in his nephew but who, up to this time, has been unable to take him into his home. Or it may be that Johnny should now go back to the mother from whom he came to the institution, that mother who does not have too much to offer, but who, in Johnny's eyes, is the one person in the world who can give him what he wants. She may be able, with careful supervision of a social worker who will follow Johnny into her home, to take over now. This need for a change of plan is something which we should always keep in mind, for, while it is true that we in institutions can help certain children at certain times in their lives, there is bound to come the proper time when we should step out in favor of some better plan. It is only, however, by keeping Johnny in mind as a separate personality from the others in his cottage that we will be aware of the time when he can no longer profit by what we have to give him.

Community contacts supplement intramural program

Realizing that no institution is a really normal place in which to live, we encourage each child to have all of the contacts possible outside the campus. We believe that this is one of the more important ways in which our children may express themselves as separate personalities, and find satisfaction. Being located within the city of Rochester, our children are fortunate in being able to attend the best city schools, and we can take advantage of special schools to meet the special needs of individual children. We have discontinued our own church service on the Hill in favor of a plan whereby the older children attend the church of their own choice or the choice of their parents, relatives, or friends, while the younger children attend a nearby church. To be sure, we know that not every older boy or girl attends church every Sunday. Under our plan it is an easy matter for them to be away from the cottage during the regular church hour and to return at the proper moment so that their attendance at church is implied. Yet, is

it not better for them to miss an occasional Sunday than to be forced to attend a church on the grounds where many have little or no interest in the service, because they come together with the same children and adults with whom they live during the week? There can not be the same stimulation and inspiration through this plan as is possible through attendance at churches of their own choosing, with parents, relatives, or friends.

Practically every boy who is old enough is a member of a branch Y. M. C. A., and during the summer particularly its swimming pool is a life saver for many of our boys. This participation in the activities of the "Y" again throws them in touch with children from normal homes in the community, and makes them feel that they are not altogether different from the others. Although we maintain a library in the institution, we encourage our children to take out cards in the neighborhood branch library. Our Girl Scouts are members of troops outside the institution. In short, we feel that the program which we maintain in the institution is merely supplementary to that which is made possible for our children through our nearness to the community outside, for "off the Hill" each child faces life more normally and more realistically.

Through the intramural program we attempt to appeal to the interests of all, so that there may be some one activity, at least, in which each child may be interested. This, we know, is not achieved, but at least it is our goal. These activities take the form of a camera club, which is doing outstanding work; a model airplane club, which produces models which fly for a surprising period of time under their own power; a Boy Scout troop; social dancing, which gives each child, when old enough, an opportunity to learn not only appropriate dances but also many social graces; the issuance of a monthly paper—put out by the children, and contributed to by the alumni; athletic games in our small gymnasium and during the summer on our athletic field; various kinds of craft work, which not only give a boy and girl the satisfaction of producing things which are of value to them or to their friends or relatives, but also teach them how to use their hands. These and other interests are provided within the institution. But at all times we keep in mind that our major emphasis is upon the children's participation in outside activities.

Every normal boy or girl likes pets. It not only gives them a lot of satisfaction, but through it they learn all sorts of valuable lessons—how to take care of animals; how to assume responsibility regularly and consistently; how to understand the mysteries of sex; these and many others. To be sure, keeping

pets in institutions causes a lot of additional work for the cottage parents and others, but the children's needs decided in favor of pets. Several chickens have been cared for, countless rabbits with their numerous and frequent offspring, three ducks, two dogs, several cats; yes, there have been times the past two months when things became pretty hectic in one of our cottages. But having had the satisfaction and enjoyment of these pets the boys themselves have learned that it takes a lot of extra work to care properly for them, and the pet family is now reduced to a mere two dogs, two chickens, a duck, and a cat. They would never have arrived at this conclusion unless they had been allowed this experience. How little, really, do our children learn from what we say to them, and how much do they learn from the things which they themselves do.

No institution is facing the job of caring properly for children unless it makes possible within its program training in the use of money for all boys and girls from a very young age up. Unless we are giving our boys and girls the chance to learn how to use money, either through payments for work or an allowance, we are failing our children in a mighty important part of their development.

Relatives' visits

Do we institutional folk have rules for visiting which are more for our own convenience than for the children or their parents and relatives, or are we flexible in connection with visiting hours? We believe in practically no restrictions on visiting except at mealtime, and in the evening after bedtime. There is nothing more important in Tom's life than his relationship to his older brother. Yet, if we allow this older brother to visit only Sunday afternoons it may frequently be impossible for him to see his younger brother at that time. Why shouldn't he be encouraged to come at some other time, which may be more convenient for him, and why shouldn't he be occasionally invited to dinner so that Tommy can show him off to the other boys? We see innumerable benefits to many of our children because of this liberal visiting policy.

The cottage parents are urged to take a special interest in the school work of each boy or girl in their cottages. Not only do we take an interest in the school work as such, but in the activities of our children, particularly the younger ones in the grade schools. The cottage mother or social worker frequently attends parent-teacher meetings, and one or the other is always on hand when there are special doings in which their children take part.

Our democratic ideals call for freedom of thought and freedom of speech. Do we always apply these democratic ideals to our institutional program? Do we always encourage children to think for themselves? Do we always allow Tom to give us the reason for his behavior, which seems to us to be out of order, or do we consider his attempt to explain "sass" and backtalk? This opportunity should be one of the cardinal principles of our treatment of children as individuals.

Recently a fourteen-year-old boy left Hillside. A short time prior to his leaving we discovered that he had done a lot of thinking about his experiences here in the institution, which covered a period of three years, and he had jotted down some of the things which he thought should be a part of every cottage mother's equipment. We think these points are outstanding, outstanding enough so that we are using them as a real guide for all of us. We believe that others might profit by keeping them firmly fixed in their minds. Here they are:

"How to Win the Boy's Approval"

1. Be able to take care of yourself (Cottage Mother).*
2. Always give the boy a chance to express his opinion in an argument, or he will figure it is no use to even try to help himself, and nothing will ever be done about his condition. He will become a problem child.
3. If he has done something which is very bad, and he has talked with his social worker about it, it would be best not to talk too much about it. The boy is trying to get it off his mind. To remind him of the same thing over again makes him feel that everyone in the office and in the cottage are against him.
4. Do not expect the boys to do much unnecessary work. The result is an ugly, disobedient child.
5. Cottage mothers should realize that the children on the Hill have no homes, or they have homes but their parents are broken up. Some of them have only one parent and some have none. It is sometimes difficult to have children happy under these conditions, especially in the case of a divorce and remarriage on the part of one parent.
6. I believe severe punishment will *never* cure a bad boy. A good heart-to-heart talk with him is a better cure than any punishment. If, however, after the talk the boy continues to act as he did before, then the cottage mother would have to do what she thought best.
7. Boys can't be perfect all of the time.
8. If the boys have some secret or something of the like, cottage mothers should not try to get it out of them.
9. Show no partiality to any boy."

As the writer considers the above material, he recognizes that there is not one new idea in the lot, but, rather, they are a collection of policies and ideas which are known to all of us. Perhaps there may be one or two which we have not tried recently, and possibly one which might work. Who can tell?

* This implies that the cottage mother should be able to stand on her own feet and not have to refer too many decisions to the office or to her husband, the cottage father.

BULLETIN

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Henrietta L. Gordon, *Editor*

The Bulletin is in large measure a Forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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Changing Times—A Challenge

THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA has, since its inception, been charged with the responsibility to give leadership in the development of standards of child care and protection. Its original function, to serve as a Bureau of Exchange of Information, had as its purpose to help agencies pool their experiences so that they could learn from each other how best to serve their respective communities. Toward this end the information service has this year been extended.

The promotion of child welfare standards and programs, the protection of gains in services throughout the country, becomes a more compelling responsibility in times of national emergency. When community energy and resources are being called upon to serve new and inexorable needs in the interests of our defense program, those charged especially with the care of dependent children must know that their services are a vital part of national defense. They must know that their greatest contribution to a high order of civilian morale will be in protecting the welfare services to children and their families. In other words, they must see that events have created ever new and challenging problems in the care of children whose solution is of immediate and serious concern to the welfare of our country. Katherine Lenroot* fore-saw this in discussing the joint responsibility of the Federal Children's Bureau and the Child Welfare League of America:

"In times of special stress and marked social change, concern for children becomes acute. We must summon all our resources of intelligence and energy to preserve the gains for children that have been won; and to extend them as necessary to insure a firm foundation of healthy childhood and secure family life, without which our civilization cannot withstand the tests which the next years will bring."

* See CWL BULLETIN, September, 1940.

The urgency is not only for maintaining present services, but for developing new services to meet new needs. An expanding day care program, for example, so that homes will not be unnecessarily broken up, is one of those urgent needs. Children who belong with their parents should not be placed only because their mothers are being called away from their homes through their own as well as the country's necessity. Here is one illustration of how plans for the welfare of children must be able to meet a changing necessity if the established services we represent are to serve their valid purpose.

How does this affect the activities of social work agencies? The present League plan has been to stress an educational program; that agency standards of service be raised; that staff development programs be extended; that agencies see their program as meeting an otherwise unmet community need. Our part in this educational process has been through visits to member agencies; through its information and publications service; through its survey service; and by developing regional activities through conferences and seminars. We have come to recognize, however, that no agency for the care of dependent children can isolate itself from its community's welfare program. No agency can have a program for its children based on concepts not understood and accepted as valid for all children by its community. For a comprehensive program for dependent children is the implement of the entire community concerned with the welfare of all its children.

However, this concern has frequently led agencies to a deterioration in actual services. Agencies have felt forced, because of social pressure, to overlook their specific purpose and to attempt to meet all emerging needs. Staffs, frustrated in their attempt to meet all needs and not knowing the area of their specific service, have confused clients.

To avoid confusion and to use resources wisely, each agency and each social worker, as never before, must go into his community and know it. The League urges member agencies, through their staffs and boards, to study the child welfare problems of their community, to give active leadership in planning and developing services to meet these needs. Thus their place in the community program will become clear. Only then will social workers be able to realize the full effectiveness of working within the limits of the designated purpose of their agency.

—HENRIETTA L. GORDON

CWLA Holds First Seminar for Supervisors

THE Mid-Western region of the Child Welfare League has just held its first seminar for supervisors. A group of twenty-six, coming from eight states representing twenty-three agencies, seven from the public field, lived for four days at The Derings, Green Lake, Wisconsin, and under the able leadership of Miss Fern Lowry, of the faculty of the New York School of Social Work, spent eight two-hour sessions from Tuesday afternoon, September 2nd, to Saturday afternoon, September 6th, in what they called a "Workshop for Supervisors."

Besides these periods of formal discussion, there was material for reading and considerable informal discussion. The registrants had sent in advance some of their pressing questions, which were used as a basis for discussion. The participants will have mimeographed copies of minutes of these meetings.

Among the several advantages which the group felt, besides the opportunity to consider together such pertinent questions as—

How different from the job of case work is supervision?

Types of evaluation—the worker's participation in the evaluation process.

How the supervisor keeps aware of the client while she is teaching.

How to help a worker be more aware of her responsibility to the community.

The difference between individual supervision conferences and group conferences—

was that much had been gained from the experience of living together for this period and really getting to know one another. Their enthusiasm expressed itself in their desire to re-convene next year for a continuation of these sessions. The general feeling was, "Why has this never happened before when it is of such tremendous help to us?"

All agreed that the seminar was a decided success, and all recognized that no small measure of this was due to the untiring efforts of Mrs. Nelle Lane Gardner, Executive Secretary of the Children's Service Association, Milwaukee, who was responsible for the planning and organization.

League Directory Changes

Mr. Herschel Alt has resigned as General Secretary of the St. Louis Children's Aid Society to become Director of the Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls School, Hawthorne, New York.

Mr. Paul T. Beisser has resigned as General Secretary of the Henry Watson Children's Aid Society,

Baltimore, Maryland, to become General Secretary of the St. Louis Children's Aid Society.

Miss Helen Mason has become temporary General Secretary of the Henry Watson Children's Aid Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

Miss Margaret Barbee, formerly Assistant General Secretary of the Henry Watson Children's Aid Society, has become Executive Director of the New York Child's Foster Home Service, New York.

Miss Eva Burmeister, formerly Case Worker at the Milwaukee Orphans' Asylum, has become its Superintendent.

READERS' FORUM

DEAR ED:

Has the Child Welfare League ever considered backing a Journal of Child Placing? It seems to me that child placing could well use such a journal for purposes of discussion and unified development. As far as I know, child placing is one of the few professional fields lacking a journal.

I hope the League will consider the possibility of such a publication for the field of child placing. It is something we definitely need and the Child Welfare League is the logical organization to start it.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM H. STAVSKY, PH.D.
Psychologist, Children's Service Center of Wyoming Valley,
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

REPLY:

During the past year the Child Welfare League has been considering how it can most effectively serve the professional staff members of its agencies. We have recognized their need to exchange views on current and ever-changing practices and have considered the possibility of a child care journal. The possibility of a quarterly was given some thought also. However, quite aside from the problem of financing this venture, we have been concerned with how comparatively inarticulate are the staffs in the child caring agencies. The last year or two has seen an increasing number of articles of interest to workers in foster home care, institutions and in the protective services, and an ever-increasing search for such material. This has encouraged us to consider ways and means of further stimulating such efforts. It has occurred to us that during the coming year we might interest staff members to send us articles of various lengths on the principles and practices of child care in their respective agencies, on current thinking, and pressures toward change in practice. These articles would be kept together in what we thought to call a Source Book. The articles would be announced in the BULLETIN and be available for circulation among member agencies for discussion, comment, and for stimulation for similar written expressions from staff members. At the end of a given period of time, the best of these articles could be published in journal form.

The League's Information and Publications Service would like to have some written discussion from staff members about this plan. Does it seem like one that will meet a need? What modifications should be considered. Have you any suggestion for enlisted wide participation? Will you let us hear soon so that plans can get under way?

EDITOR

THE BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS—

AND EXAMINES HIS TRUSTEESHIP*

What really is an underprivileged child? Compare some sons of families of great wealth and Lincoln in his poverty, and ask which were more privileged.

What are the things a child needs to give him a chance in life? Years ago, Theodore Roosevelt's White House Conference decided that the five rights of life were:

1. To be well born.
2. Health.
3. Education.
4. Recreation.
5. Religion.

As some of you know, I have been a chronic board member. One of my first board memberships was that of the Industrial Reform School of Louisville, and one of the first questions I asked when I went on that board was—"Why are these children here?" I checked carefully and the answers came back time after time—Broken Homes—Lack of the Right Home.

Those five rights must be assured by the home, with its natural affection of parents for one another,

parent for child and of child for parent. A child is a product of a home. But do you realize how the home has been attacked on all sides?

Years ago most people lived on farms. They produced the things they needed there. The children helped their parents, and truly felt needed by them. But steam came along and the making of cloth, and canning and many other activities went into factories. And the old spinning wheel became a memory—used for decoration and atmosphere. And the man who works in a factory receives his entire compensation in money, and people think in terms of money and the things money can buy. What does this do to the home?

Even the school seems to say, "Honor thy school-teacher for thy father and thy mother are a little bit dumb."

Many well-to-do and otherwise intelligent people think they can hire people—usually low-paid servants, to care for children. Often, in less comfortable circumstances, the women leave the home and work. Sometimes women go to work in business and hire cheaper people to care for children, thinking to be able to give children "advantages."

So the greatest thing we can do is to build around the child's natural love and admiration for a parent. Don't be a "lady bountiful"—don't pauperize—don't patronize. Help children to help themselves. Remember that a child is anxious to "rate." That's why he works for grades or athletic letters. Let us help good things rate well.

It matters little what one man may say, but much what groups like ours may do. A club may help, economically, underprivileged children go to camp, get glasses, or dental and medical care, or may meet any need and so render valuable service.

When one thinks of Madison, he is likely to think of the great Sculptor whose name and fame went round the world because he could mold clay in the form of a human being. You are working with something infinitely more valuable and important than clay.

—GEORGE STOLL

Member of Board of Directors, *The Children's Agency, Louisville, Kentucky*

* From a speech delivered at the Kiwanis Club, April 24, 1941, Madison, Indiana.

National Conference of Catholic Charities

THE twenty-seventh meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Charities will be held in Houston, Texas, from Sunday, October 19th, through Wednesday, October 22nd, at the Rice Hotel. The six sections of the Conference will deal with problems related to families, children, health, protective and corrective work, community activities and youth activities. The St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Conference of Religious will hold their annual meetings at the same time.

The formal and informal discussions in general will deal with our present emergency situation and its impact on the lives of men, women and children. In a rapidly changing scene, where each day brings new developments with consequent shifting of emphases, it is important that gains already achieved be guarded and secured for the future. Although defense and its implications for all social welfare activities will be given considerable space on the program, the normal processes and responsibilities of peace time will not be overlooked.

This Conference will study the interrelationship of Catholic Charities and other organizations, such as the American Red Cross, dealing with the social problems of service men and women and their families. There will also be discussions related to questions concerning the National Catholic Community Service and training camps, naval stations and defense areas, likewise new and serious problems of housing, recreation, health and hospital care.

Other subjects before the Conference will include the unemployment of young men and women, still a serious matter in sections which have none of the new defense industries; the prevention of crime and juvenile delinquency in the swiftly changing social order; direction of a great volunteer effort, as well as the fundamental problems of family service, child welfare, old age security and relief for the needy.

MISS BETH MULLER, Chairman of the Committee for the Southwest Regional Conference of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc., announces that the fall Conference will be held at Hotel Arlington, Hot Springs, Arkansas, on November 13, 14 and 15. No announcement of program is yet available. The States which comprise this southwest area are as follows: Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico.

The National Association for Nursery Education will hold its biennial conference in Detroit, October 24th through 27th, at the Book-Cadillac Hotel. Social workers will contribute to the thinking at these sessions, which are directed toward the theme of "Life, Liberty and Happiness for Children Now."

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

The Children's Friend Society and the Family Welfare Society of Providence, Rhode Island, have been holding a series of meetings during the past year in an effort to establish the basis for their differentiated services, and the ways in which they cooperate to achieve their mutual concern for an integrated community program. They concluded that:

1. Inasmuch as both the Children's Friend Society and the Family Welfare Society are private case working agencies, the basic principle of operation for each agency is the same; namely, to help in specific ways to enable the client to move toward independence.
2. Both agencies are concerned with the welfare of families and the welfare of children. However, this broad concern can not be a practical basis for differentiation of policy or of practice. Acceptance of cases by either agency must be in terms of the specific way in which each agency approaches its basic goal. (See attached statement of specific function of each agency.)
3. Applications coming to either agency shall be given careful consideration with the client or referring party to determine which is the agency better suited to meet the client's needs. By this is meant, that the agency to which the applicant comes shall take responsibility for careful determination of this point through one or more interviews, attempting to help the client either make constructive use of the agency or to prepare him for application to another agency if indicated. Such a process should be considered a real case work service.
4. Each agency is willing to consult with the other in cases where questions of function seem involved. This is considered advisable regardless of whether or not referral is contemplated.
5. In view of the fundamental goals of each agency as expressed in No. 1, it should be recognized that there may be cases where neither agency will feel it has a function. In such instances, the situation becomes an agency or community problem and may indicate broader problems, such as a need for re-evaluation of agency function, development of a new service in the community, etc. When such occasions arise they should be given recognition through a formal inter-agency conference and the findings recorded.

In the following areas of problems and services there is apt to be confusion as to division of responsibility between the two agencies.

1. Motherless families.
2. Unmarried mothers.
3. Individual children and parent-child relationships where placement is not indicated.
4. Housekeeper service.

The Family Welfare Society and the Children's Friend Society have accepted the following criteria as a basis for intake in these areas:

1. Motherless families (where the mother is dead or permanently out of the home):
 - a. The Family Welfare Society accepts these cases when there is no indication for placement and when there is a daughter or relative living with the family who is able to assume the role of mother.
 - b. The Children's Friend Society accepts these cases when placement is indicated, there being no one in the home able to assume the role of mother.
2. Unmarried mothers:
 - a. The Family Welfare Society accepts responsibility for case work service when mother and baby are accepted in the home as an integral part of the family.
 - b. The Children's Friend Society accepts responsibility for case work service when plans for placement of the mother before or after confinement are indicated or when plans for placement or adoption of the baby are indicated.
3. Problems of individual children and parent-child relationships are accepted by both agencies and are subject to further exploration. At present the basis of intake is as follows:
 - a. The Family Welfare Society accepts these cases when it would seem the difficulty could be met within the setting of the client's own home.
 - b. The Children's Friend Society accepts these cases when it would seem the difficulty could be met through placement.
4. Housekeeper service:
 - a. The Family Welfare Society accepts these cases when the mother is ill and in the home, working but living at home, or when the mother is out of the home temporarily and eventual return is anticipated within three months.
 - b. The Children's Friend Society accepts cases when the mother is permanently out of the home or temporarily out for more than three months.

Mechanics of Procedure

1. If one agency contemplates referring a case or advising a client to apply to the other agency, the case should be discussed by representatives of both agencies before taking this step.
2. Referrals and consultations should be made through personal conference rather than by telephone.
3. When a case is accepted by the second agency, there should be a clear understanding as to whether the referring agency is closing the case and thereby transferring entire case work responsibility to the second agency, or whether both agencies will continue with the case and it thereby becomes a co-operative case. Whether it becomes a transferred or co-operative case, the steps of procedure by each agency, especially in relation to the client, should be understood in order to put the new relationship into effective operation.

The National Citizens Committee of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy announces that Miss H. Ida Curry has been released from the temporary directorship, and is now succeeded by Dr. Betty Eckhardt May. Their new offices are at 122 East 22nd Street, New York City.

The Henry Watson Children's Aid Society, Baltimore, Maryland, has voted to merge with the Family Welfare Association of Baltimore. The date of the merger has not yet been announced.

BOOK NOTES

PROBLEMS AND PROCEDURE IN ADOPTION, by Mary Ruth Colby. Children's Bureau Publication No. 262.

This is "the report of a study in nine states where responsibility has been given to the State Public Welfare Department for the investigation of petitions for adoption." It was "intended to show the extent to which the safeguard set up by legislation or thru administration had been effective," and also to furnish a basis for "recommendations to other States now contemplating changes in their adoption laws."

The study dealt with cases of 2,041 children for whom petitions were filed in 1934. Seventeen hundred and eighteen of these children in these states were adopted. Miss Colby reported on the children for whom the adoption petitions were filed, their race and sex, their parents, the status of their birth. She studied the petitioners, their relationship to the child, their marital status, and their residence. Slightly more than half of the children placed were placed by agencies. Parents and relatives and an occasional guardian were responsible for three-fourths of the independent placements. In two states, child placing agencies "provided an opportunity for some service to foster parents after the filing of the decree, but the children independently placed lost out by not having the "benefits of agency service in the selection of their homes." Independent placements were of great concern to the state departments.

The section relating to the services of the State Department is well worth stressing. Miss Colby pointed out that "if sound adoption practices are to be developed in any state, the state welfare department must be responsible for supervising institutions and agencies placing children in adoption and improving standards of service." In all the states there was definite need for expansion of educational programs and better public relations with professional groups and the lay public. She then went into detail about the investigation of the adoption petitions, the plan for having these made, agencies or persons making them, procedures used and the report for the court. She points out that these investigations take time and skill if they are to be adequate, that a great deal depends on the personnel making them. In the majority of cases the judges accepted the recommendations of the state department, their working partner in promoting the welfare of the child.

In concluding, Miss Colby's findings clearly show the importance of an adequate social investigation and the responsibilities of the State Department in a

good adoption program. The number of independent placements are a challenge to the private agencies. More care should obviously be taken in regard to consent. There is greater need for keeping adoption records confidential. A period of at least six months' residence of the child in the adoption home seems essential.

I have found this study practical and thought-provoking.

—PERSIS S. HOLDEN

General Secretary, *Vermont Children's Aid Society, Inc.*

THE PARENTS' MANUAL, by Anna W. M. Wolf. 329 pp. Simon & Schuster, N. Y. Price \$2.50.

What do we want most to give our children? This author answers that, among the most important things, are the capacity to love and a zest for life. And she believes that the kind of parents who can help children to achieve these goals are those who really enjoy their children, who create an atmosphere of affection in the home, and who can "teach children with their lives, not with their words; with what they are, not with procedures and methods."

With such parents, who understand their own mixed emotions and their hostile impulses towards their children, and who face their problems with realism and courage, a child has the best chance of developing an inner security of the affections which equips him to weather the storms even of this alarming modern world.

While the author emphasizes that "character is not formed by specific training but develops in a highly complex fashion as the result of the early interrelationships of family life," she is generous with practical and very helpful illustrations of how to deal with specific problems. She suggests that many every-day difficulties may be avoided by resourceful parents who help set the stage for success instead of failure. If a child seems upset, the parents, instead of paying too much attention to individual symptoms, should try to learn what the child is feeling about his parents, about other people and about himself, and then should endeavor to replace unhappy experiences with more satisfying ones. There are valuable suggestions about telling a passing problem from a serious one. The child's general state of happiness is a very essential test, and if he continues to find life unsatisfactory, expert help should be obtained.

"The forgotten father" is given a chapter and there is a very excellent discussion about the dominance of women in child rearing and the problems which this creates for men, women and children.

The author hopes that parents will remain simple enough to celebrate significant holidays in their homes. "These are the experiences that bind human beings in homes and homes in nations. If we lose them as a people, we stand in danger of losing our soul, and the road to getting it back again may be a long and tragic journey."

To anyone associated with children, personally or professionally, this book will bring delight and new enthusiasm for the task of helping them to grow up.

—SOPHIE HARDY

Executive Secretary, *The Children's Protective Society, San Francisco*

SOME PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION AND REARING OF ADOPTED CHILDREN, by Robert P. Knight, M.D.

This article, which appeared in the Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic (May, 1941), is one of the most important articles dealing with adoption problems in some years. It discusses the psychiatric aspects of certain pre-adoption and post-adoption problems.

Dr. Knight emphasizes the question, "Why do the prospective parents not have a child of their own, instead of adopting one?" Sterility may be organic, in which case the individual's adjustment to that situation is important. Functional sterility implies an unconscious opposition to children and to parenthood, which may operate in various ways to defeat conscious attempts to achieve pregnancy. The conclusion is that, "in general, the best foster parents, other factors being equal, will come from those couples in whom the sterility is organic, especially if they desired, had and lost a child prior to the onset of the organic sterility, or those in whom the functional sterility exists in spite of sustained and consistent desire, over a period of several years, to have a child, provided the child is not desired merely to help preserve a shaky marriage."

Dr. Knight discusses the meaning of rigid specifications set up by applicants as to the age, sex, coloring and other characteristics of the child they wish to adopt. This may be related to having had such a child of their own who died, but is more apt to be evidence of reluctance to have children at all. It is obvious that applicants may ensure their failure to find a child for adoption by being too rigid and specific in their demands, although they can rationalize that failure by their desperate efforts to find the "right" child; it becomes, not their failure, but the failure of society to produce exactly the child they want. Dr. Knight concludes that, whatever underlies it, "the pre-condition for loving a child which is involved in insistence on certain definite charac-

teristics, bodes ill for the future receiving of affection by a child who may almost meet the exact requirements at the time of his selection, but who later develops other characteristics which do not suit his new parents."

Prospective adoptive parents find themselves having to make a difficult decision as to the age of the child they wish to take. Debate on this particular question has raged for years. It is significant that Dr. Knight says: "The best advice, probably, would be for the prospective parents to decide on adopting a very young baby whose background is very well known to the agency, and whose careful examination by a good pediatrician reveals no abnormalities. I should go further and advise that the legal adoption be delayed until the child's development justifies the original premise of his normality, and further advise that, if possible, he should be examined by a competent psychologist before final adoption."

Two post-adoption problems are discussed in some detail. One is in telling the adopted child early that he is adopted. The other problem is that there is the danger that adoptive parents, in their inexperience with children and their ignorance of the fact that most children indulge in a-social or even anti-social behavior in the process of growing up, will attribute such behavior in the adopted child to bad inheritance.

Social workers have, at least in general, advised adopting parents to tell the child of his adoption, although advice as to the when and how may have been omitted or varied with different workers. I wonder whether we have anticipated the second natural but very serious pitfall sufficiently to prepare the foster parents to guard against interpreting normal misconduct of a child as evidence of bad inheritance and rejecting the child for it, thus immeasurably increasing the problem.

This article is well worth studying.

—KATHRYNE MULLINNIX

Director, Adoption Study, Ohio Department of Public Welfare

New Publications

FOSTER DAY CARE: Some current questions, problems and practices, compiled by Henrietta L. Gordon. Price, 25 cents.

PROBLEMS OF AGENCY ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION: Two methods of approach in children's services, by Ora Pendleton, Edith L. Lauer, and Kenneth L. Pray. Price, 30 cents.

Lending Library Service

THE privilege of borrowing books from the library of the Child Welfare League is a service available to members and affiliate agencies. Books will be sent upon request for an initial two-week period, with renewal privileges for an additional two weeks.

The following books have been reviewed in the BULLETIN in the past year and are part of our lending library:

THE ADOLESCENT COURT AND CRIME PREVENTION: Jeanette G. Brill and E. George Payne, Pitman Pubn. Corp., New York, 1938.

AN ADOPTED CHILD LOOKS AT ADOPTION: Carol S. Prentice, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1940.

BORROWED CHILDREN: Mrs. St. Loe Strachey, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1940.

CHILD CARE AND TRAINING: Marion L. Faegre and John E. Anderson, Univ. of Minnesota Press, Rev. Ed., 1940.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY FOR PROFESSIONAL WORKERS: Florence M. Teagarden, Ph.D., Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1940.

THE FAMILY AND THE LAW: Sarah T. Knox, University of N. C. Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1940.

FEEDING THE FAMILY: Mary Swartz Rose, Ph.D., Macmillan Co., New York, 1940.

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF LIFE: Arnold Gesell and others, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1940.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR BABY: Dr. H. Kent Tenney, Jr., University of Minnesota Press, 1940.

LIFE AND GROWTH: Alice V. Keliher, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1940.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL CASE WORK: Josephine Strode, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1940.

THE PARENTS' MANUAL: Anna W. M. Wolf, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1940.

PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORK: Lois Meredith French, The Commonwealth Fund, 1940.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE AND HER PATIENT: Ruth Gilbert, R.N., The Commonwealth Fund, 1940.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL CASE WORK: Gordon Hamilton, Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1940.

WE, THE PARENTS: Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1939.

THE YOUTH OF NEW YORK CITY: Nettie Pauling McGill and Ellen Nathalie Matthews, Macmillan Company, New York, 1940.

PAMPHLETS

CARE OF DEPENDENT, NEGLECTED AND DELINQUENT CHILDREN IN ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA. A study made under the direction of Helen Glenn Tyson, published by Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania, 1940.

PROBLEMS AND PROCEDURES ON ADOPTION: Mary Ruth Colby, U. S. Children's Bureau Pubn. No. 262, 1941.

ON SUPERVISION OF THE TRANSFERENCE IN PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORK, by Dr. Harry B. Levey, Psychiatry, 1940.

PARENTS WANTED, by the Adoption Committee of the Family and Child Welfare Division of the Buffalo Council of Social Agencies, published by the Buffalo Council of Social Agencies, 1941, 10 cents.